

The first liturgy was held in 1908 and the Church was consecrated by Bishop Raphael during a visit in 1911 to celebrate the burning of the church's mortgage.

A rectory was built in 1912 and the old part of the Church cemetery in Hanover Township was also acquired. Father Joseph Elia Xanthopoulos became the pastor in 1912 when Father George moved to Allentown. Father Joseph was fluent in Arabic and Greek, and he chanted in Byzantine. He started a Syrian school for young people, who had begun to chant with him during the service.

The community began to split in 1914 because the Syrian Mission in America began to divide. During this time, services were held at the church on High Street for those following the Russian Patriarch, and at 107 Blackman Street, for those following the Antiochian Patriarch.

Several pastors served the Church through the years: Father Daniel George, Father Abdallah Khoury, Father Constantine Abou-Adal, Archbishop Affirmos Ofeish and Father George Mitchell, Father Anthony Sakey, Father Nicholas Hussan and Father Herbert Nahas.

In 1958, the parishioners decided they wanted to build a new Church, Hall and Rectory. They chose a site at the south end of Main Street and purchased it for \$28,500 in 1964. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as the other three sites that had been considered were completely submerged in 16 feet of water by Hurricane Agnes in June 1972.

When Agnes hit Wilkes-Barre, 108 families from the parish were left homeless. The businesses of 35 parishioners were closed for months. Miraculously, the flood waters stopped just outside the parish hall doors, and the building became one of many shelters. The men and women of St. Mary's worked tirelessly to help the victims of the devastating flood.

In 1985, Father Edward Hughes became pastor of the Church, followed by Father Mark Sahady in 1994. Father Thomas Zain came to St. Mary's in 1994 and served as pastor until 1997. Father John Winfrey became pastor of the Church in 1997. The Very Reverend Father David Hester came to St. Mary's in 2000 and currently serves as pastor.

Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to represent a parish community with such a rich history. The parishioners at St. Mary's have preserved their heritage and kept meticulous records of their history to pass on to future generations, and I congratulate them on the joyful occasion of the Church's 100th anniversary.

**HONORING COLONEL ROBERT N. AGE FOR HIS 32 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE MISSOURI AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

**HON. SAM GRAVES**

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 21, 2004*

Mr. GRAVES. Mr. Speaker, I proudly pause to recognize Colonel Robert N. Agee, Vice Commander for 139th Airlift Wing at Rosecrans Air National Guard Base in St. Joseph, Missouri. Colonel Agee is retiring on October 1, 2004 after 32 years of service to the Missouri Air National Guard. Colonel Agee cur-

rently resides in St. Joseph with his wife Sheila, and together they have two daughters, Rachael and Jennifer, and a son R.J.

Colonel Agee was born on December 25, 1949 in St. Joseph. He joined the Missouri Air National Guard in 1970, and graduated from the first Air National Guard Officer Preparatory Academy in May of 1971. Following his graduation, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant. Colonel Agee attended pilot training at Williams AFB in Arizona, and earned his pilot wings on September 9, 1972. In 1976, Colonel Agee graduated from Missouri Western with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration Management. Additionally, he has completed Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and the Air War College.

Colonel Agee has performed duties in training, safety, tactics, standardization/evaluation and was the director of operations for the flying squadron prior to his current assignment. He was activated in December 1990 for Operation Desert Shield/Storm and served as the director of operations for the 180th Airlift Squadron in theater until their release from active duty in June 1991. In addition to training aircraft, he has flown the C-97G, KC-97L, C-130A, and the C-130H.

Among his military decorations are the Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal with one oak leaf cluster, Air Force Outstanding Award with the three oak leaf clusters and "V" device, Air Force Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, and Kuwait Liberation Medals from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

As the former Operations Group Commander he had responsibility for our units, the 180th Airlift Squadron, the 139th Operations Support Flight, the 139th Aerial Port Flight, and the 241st Air Traffic Control Squadron in addition to the Standardization/Evaluation section. These squadrons are the support and execution component of the C-130 airlift mission. The unit continuously supports real-world airlift commitments in the United States and overseas in addition to local air training.

Mr. Speaker, I proudly ask you to join me in commending the career of Colonel Robert N. Agee, who has exemplified the qualities of dedication and service throughout his tenure with the Missouri Air National Guard.

**PAYING TRIBUTE TO MATT ZISKA**

**HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO**

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 21, 2004*

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of my constituents, Matt Ziska. Mr. Ziska recently received national recognition from the National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) for his hard work and dedication in his field. The Departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Defense, Veterans Affairs, and FEMA, all partnered with the NDMS, to grant this award.

Mr. Ziska has been employed as a hazardous materials technician at the Tri-County Health Department based in Aurora. His advice to the Disaster Medical Assistance Team has helped them enhance and improve protective measures designed to safeguard against the dangers of hazardous materials.

Mr. Ziska was selected from a field of 130 team members.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join in paying tribute to Matt Ziska, and wish him the best in all his future endeavors.

**HONORING THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF AGUDAS ACHIM CONGREGATION AND RECOGNIZING THE MILITARY VETERANS OF THE CONGREGATION**

**HON. TOM DAVIS**

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 21, 2004*

Mr. TOM DAVIS of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Agudas Achim Congregation, a conservative synagogue located in the city of Alexandria, Virginia.

In conjunction with this anniversary, honor is being paid to the military veterans of the congregation throughout the Veteran's Day weekend of November 12-14, 2004.

Jewish servicemen and servicewomen have served and continue to serve proudly in all branches of the United States as career and reserve servicemen and servicewomen. From Bunker Hill and the Battle of Springfield (NJ) to Omaha Beach and the Battle of the Bulge, from Pusan, South Korea to the Mekong Delta in Vietnam as well as Afghanistan and Iraq, Jewish servicemen have worn the uniform of the United States proudly—defending democracy and the freedoms we all cherish as Americans.

We remember those who fearlessly paid the ultimate price in defending the United States of America during times of war. We also recall those who have bravely fought and returned home as well as those who continue to fight for the freedoms and liberties that make this nation great—the same freedoms and liberties such as freedom of religion that brought hundreds of thousands of Jewish people to the United States escaping despotism and religious tyranny.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would like to congratulate Agudas Achim Congregation on their 90th anniversary. I call upon my colleagues to join me in honoring the congregation's military veterans.

**TRIBUTE TO STAFF SERGEANT JOSEPH FALES**

**HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE**

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, September 21, 2004*

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Staff Sergeant Joseph Fales, a World War II veteran who gave his life fighting against tyranny so that we might live free.

In honor of Memorial Day, I had the pleasure of recognizing Staff Sergeant Fales for his heroism and bravery as a U.S. Soldier who fought in the Second World War until his death in October 1943.

Staff Sergeant Fales served in the Army Air Force and heroically performed the perilous job of a waist gunner aboard a B-17 Bomber.